The

TOWER

1950

Because of her interest in
and her work with the students
of Alabama College we dedicate
the 1950 *Tower* to
DR. EVA GOLSON

The Tower

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THIS is by way of introducing you to your 1950 *Tower*. In it you will find collected the best literary efforts of the campus during the past year.

We of the *Tower* staff feel that the *Tower* fulfills both a purpose and a need at Alabama College. First we hope that the *Tower* will encourage students to create with pen and paper, second we hope that the *Tower* gives an over all picture of the type and caliber of writing that the students here are doing.

It is the staff's sincere hope that this *Tower* of print and paper will find its place in your life as the bigger structure of cement and stone has done before it, and that in future years bigger and better *Towers* will be yours as a result of increased creativity among the students on this campus.

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I DREAMED THERE WAS UTTER DARKNESS

By Pat Mayher

I dreamed there was utter darkness
Broken only by a wierd inhuman sound . . .
The sound of a whirling mass of foam
Engulfing a mass of unknown . . . down . . .
Down to an hellish abyss.
There appeared then a misty light
Settling over one strange small spot—the spot grew soft.
As deep as the eye could see . . .
And deep within its foaming clutch,
Within the damning grasps of hell itself,
Was a greenish form—that took the shape of a human skull
Without body—flesh—heart, without . . .
Is soul the last to die!

And from the hollows—once for eyes—
Came tears—of living blood—that froze
Before they fell . . . Oh God! What has man done!
But then from this inhuman form of
. . . would be dust . . . came forth, "My God!"
No more was there this savage light
Nor any more a struggling fight
Between hell and man. In its place
Was a shining ray—like God's own hand—
For one who loved the thing most worthy of loving.
Deliriously the swirl began to lose its grasp
And from its very depths the terrored soul began to rise . . .
No longer was there depth and swirl
But a tingling stillness veiling the form.
Oh depths of hell! . . . God has taken from amid the chaos—
From amid the grim and evil of this world
One less spark to fuel your eternal fire.
Then utter silence . . . the mist drew back . . .
There before me—before God
Was one more lovely than ever had been seen—
And slowly it rose and only was there left
Two frozen human tears . . . of blood.

Next Time?

By
B. J. GREER

NO REST for the weary, she thought as she watched the hot grease tear at the edges of the once well rounded egg. At only ten in the morning her legs ached, her feet had lost all feeling, and the steam had kinked the tiny ringlets of her faded auburn hair.

The way side restaurant was filled with the pungent odor of long boiled coffee and well used grease. The vivid, multicolored juke box thrust forth with another tune derived from the mumblings of some broken-hearted cowhand.

Methodically she went about her work, after four years the impolite utterances of the truck-driver patrons and the whizzing sound of passing cars had become oblivious. She heard only the unbroken drone of the mixture which was interrupted by the occasional orders for food. Life remained an endless murmur of orders, never ceasing waves of heat, and the sound of coins being dropped on the counter by massive, wheel-dirtied hands.

This murmuring nothingness continued as a crudely dressed driver entered. Placing all his 200 pounds on each foot as he walked, he looked around in a calculating manner, then proceeded to crawl on the well-bent counter stool. He laced his huge fingers, raised his head and gutterally ordered, "A cup of java, Cutie." She disregarded his attempt to start a conversation and proceeded to fill his order. As she watched the thick coffee edging its way to the brim of the large cup, she felt the steam sprinkle her face causing the liquid bubbles of sweat to form. She wondered how the hell any more sweat could find room for itself on her face; as she felt the watery substance slide down her hot neck, she knew. As the coffee reached the very brim, she turned the spicket handle and walked slowly to the man. "Here's your order and cut the gab, don't have to talk, just git paid to work." The man smiled at her and said, "Now don't take on so, Girlie, ya know I'm jest a talking, ain't gonna hurt ya none to be nice to people."

"Nice, hell," she replied, "what in the devil has people ever done for me? I work like a damn slave from morning till night,

and what for, eight greasy dollars a week. Sure, be nice, hell three-fourths of the people that come in here don't know the meaning of the word. What in hell have I got to be nice about?" He began smiling at her even more and mumbling something about going for a ride, but her thoughts held her attention more than his words, for how well she knew the truck driver's line.

What had caused her to say all that, as a rule she was mild tempered, or at least, so resigned to her seeming fate that it never bothered her. Of course, she truly thought these things and had for a long time, but never had she given vent to them before. Just what did she expect from people, for that matter, what did she expect from life? Was this endless grind her beginning and her end, was there nothing more to look for? As her thoughts waned, she heard . . .

"Why not, what ya got to lose? If'n ya don't like it I'll brang ya back here. Think uv all the things ya kin do in a city. Just a littl' ride with me and you'll be there in no time 'tall." As she noticed his expectant look, she thought, you think I don't know what you're aiming at, think I'se born yesterday, well, maybe I was and maybe I wasn't. Don't see as how it would hurt me none though, I shore as hell wouldn't be missed, Jake kin get another gal in my place and . . . The dullness and aching grew more prominent. She knew if one of the gawky lugs made one more remark she'd scream and to God knows where. Why not go, she questioned, why stay amid the ham, coffee, sandwiches, coffee, vulgar drivers, sweat, heat and that hard bed of hers, was all this anything to look forward to every day and night?

Why not go, all the other girls that worked there did sooner or later. Yes, all of them, even Sally. She'd always remember Sally, for Sally took her ride, too. But God it's hot she thought, and maybe Sally was just unlucky . . . Then she noticed the driver had finished, he looked up at her and said, "Well, are ya or ain't ya, I ain't got all day? Have ya decided what you're gonna do?" Are ya goin, it'll sure be nice."

She studied him a moment and said, "Yeah . . . I've decided, it'll be nice, maybe, but not this time . . ."

He stared for a moment, "Well, next time maybe?"

"Sure, next time, maybe."

The Midnight Song of Wanda

By ANNA LUKES

CHIN on knuckles, Wanda dropped her eyes on the book, once more putting another green mint in her mouth to roll across her tongue. "The beginning of the eastern empire," read the words in bold type. But she was not aware the words had something to say. She was more aware that her nails needed filing and the file was in the right hand dresser drawer, close enough, she thought, to walk over and get without interrupting her studying.

She fumbled in the drawer, a confused mass of bobby pins, curlers, ribbons, lotion, cold cream bottles, concert programs, and finding the file under the box of kleenex, began wheezing it against her nails as she sauntered toward the cushioned chair. She sat down slowly casting conscious glances at the open book, its pages pencil-smeared at the margins with distorted figures and outlined faces.

The savor of the printed words, so long in view, was rancid against the glazed metal in her hand and casting aside thoughts of reading, she straightened her back against the chair, tipping it slightly as she sprawled her legs across the desk's litterness. She would have to remember to buy a card of buttons the next time she was in the dime store. The laundry was always losing buttons from her pajamas and it was uncomfortable sleeping with safety pins jutting at her bones and at her sides.

She pulled at the legs of her striped pajamas and ran her hand over the razored hair, stiff and scratchy since Tuesday's shaving. It grew fast like a man's beard and she should have razored it when she showered earlier that night but it had not crossed her mind. Observant only of the studying she must do to pass the test, she had showered hurriedly after supper, brushed, rolled her hair, rinsed out her socks and panties, hanging them over the towel rack in her room to dry. Her legs did look thorny, like pale cactus plants, but she could not shave them now, not with that inner insistence to study spurred by the coaxing of the clock.

It was late, she knew, and she dreaded turning her eyes to the bookcase to see the hour the white alarm clock was ticking. Late and she was getting drowsy, her neck cramped, but what was

the hour? She must know or she could not study. Twelve? Six minutes after twelve? Where had the hours passed? She had sat over the book five hours and she had not read more than the first paragraph. Why? How? But she *had* tried to study, *had* tried to concentrate.

Seven o'clock and she was at her desk, her eyes wide open, her mind clear and fresh, the history book open under her nose. From the window Joyce saw the lights in the library flicker to luminosity and she left to work on her freshman library chart, leaving the room quiet for Wanda.

Wanda felt unsettled, wanting to twist from one position to the other, reading with the chair pushed up near the wall so that her back rested against it, reading in bed upright, in a prone position, but it made her sleepy. She put her pillow over the cushion, plush and squashy, and melted into it. It was comfortable, but too high, so off with the pillow and down on the cushion.

The jagged-edged letters on her desk were from Mother, Betty, her best friend, and Ray. This time Ray addressed his letter from a private institution for insane bachelors. Ray's letters always outsmarted her dull and worked-over ones. She would have to think up something good by tomorrow, something better than the "Old Women's Home" which she had to use twice.

She wondered if Ray ever let his roommate read her letters. She blushed at the thought, they were so insipid next to his ingenious ones. She felt like writing to him now, but she had promised herself she would not write tonight, it took her so long, or visit with the girls, the test being tomorrow and she having to spend all her time studying.

In the next room, she could hear Libby and Edith twirling the radio knob until they came to their regular program of semi-classical music, the choirs vibrating across the walls, ringing in her sensitive eardrums. The radio was turned down low and if she did not think about it, she would not hear at at all, or the uneven vocalizing of the girls in the showers down the hall, or the chattering voices outside the door.

She could turn her radio on to drown the noises so she could concentrate, a pert way of putting it, snubbed her conscience, but she had done it before and it had worked, cajoled another voice within. She reached back to where the radio sat on the board—cream and lacey—covering the heater, and turned the knob.

The radio was under the double windows of ruffled-organdy

and on either side of it were snapshots of two smiling young men. The one on the right was Jake, Wanda's brother, a tousle-haired youth holding down a playful dachshund. The one on the other side was Ray, the boy Wanda had been going with ever since the junior prom in high school. He was a tawny, slight-set man seated on a rock, flowers behind and a pipe in his hand.

Wanda had taken Ray's picture by Mother's flowerbed because that was the only place she could get the sun in right. Ray said he looked like an idiot posing for a beauty contest and he did not want Wanda to bring the snapshot of him to college with her. But Wanda liked the picture better than any of the others, and hiding it away in her suitcase had brought it to school with her.

Ray had asked her before they left what she had done with the snapshot, it was not in her picture album, and she had said, in a serious tone, she thought she lost it that night they were in the theater and her purse had upturned. He had looked at her, startled, as if he thought she was telling another one of her "feminine tales" as he liked to call them, but he had not said anything, only smiled at her slyly. Later he had written to her that the dormitory liked the picture of her in Grannie's pantaloons, the one Jake had snapped of her when she was trying them on for Grannie's amusement, unaware of Jake's antics.

As the radio warmed up, Wanda twisted the dial to 141, she knew the station well having tuned to it every evening after supper as she wrote letters. The notes broke through the monotony of the room and Wanda settled back in the pressed cushion, picking up her pencil, ready to underline important statements. The melody ended, the announcer advertised his product, the needle hissed and the notes sounded. "Jalousie!" She had the record at home in an album of tangos by Marek Weber and his orchestra.

She and Ray had to move everything off the rug to tango. They had danced the tango so often, the pattern had become a part of her, step, step, side together step, step, step, side together step. She rapped her blue scuffs against the floor keeping time to the melody, her pencil, the underlying beat.

She forced the radio shut, sick of the music, sick of not being able to digest the material before her, sick of not having studied all along.

The stillness of the room was nerve-racking, funeral homeyish with the noises outside checked in the room. She spelled out the words in bold type; they were lifeless, she could not animate

them. Study hard now, think of the dance, Ray, the pouf skirt, the new silver slippers tomorrow. Think of the words on the messy page.

She must put the radio on to drown out the ticking, the sharpness of the air, everything about her. The articulate voice of the announcer poured into the room, soothing, bringing a thrilling sensation of pain. When the strains of a popularized concerto drifted in, she lowered the radio.

At nine-thirty, the library closed, the "break from studying" hour on, the dormitory became a circus of merry actors, some visiting fellow workers in dressing rooms in between shows, their thick false faces on, others bundling up in coats—to conceal costumes—for a quick dash to the hot dog stand and coke machines.

There was the strong smell of coffee grains, the kitchen tastes of vegetable soups, the opened cans of pineapple, peach, chicken bones.

When Joyce came in the room, a box of crackers over her books, a spoon of butter in her hand, Wanda was staring at the book like a child contemplating whether or not to taste the liver in the plate. Weary of the imprinted words, the solitary confinement, Wanda welcomed Joyce like a friend just returned from a pleasant journey, jumping up and bouncing to the door in short leaps.

A piercing current of air gushed into the room through the opened door, rocking the abstract paintings in large white poster frames which hung on the walls perpendicular to the windows, the door, rustling the sheets on the two desks, sending the starched curtains flying in the breeze.

An hour later the halls quiet, Joyce brushed her teeth, jotted a few words in her note pad and slid in bed, closing her eyes as if asleep. There was only the occasional slam of a door, the convulsive buzz of a molested radio, or the abrupt greeting of friends in the hallway.

Alone once more with the tick-tock-ticking of the clock, Wanda suddenly felt hungry again, not for the deliciousness of roast beef or fried chicken, or the richness of French fries or warm rolls, but the sweetness of candy, brittle, soft, it did not matter. Lucky enough, there were still some mints left in the jar Mother had sent her last week along with the box of canned fruits and brownies.

No one else in her family liked candy and as she placed a mint between her teeth she wondered from whom she had inherited the

sweet tooth, or rather—and she smiled faintly—sweet teeth, she ate everybody out of their candy. She sketched a scantily clad woman at the side of the page, smearing the mouth in with the soft lead pencil.

And the seconds ticked away till suddenly she was aware it was after twelve. She pressed herself to read further, to become interested in the words. So many pages, so many chapters. She could never read them all if she stayed up the remaining night. She could skim over them, picking out important paragraphs. Make an attempt.

She read the words, meaningless and bitter in the sleepy hours of the night. Her chin, balanced on her knuckles, was heavy, no longer light and self-sustaining as a few hours previously. Her neck and back felt stiff.

She got up quickly, walked to the lavatory, whisked the cold water on, and sponging the fluffy blue wash rag in the diamond-lustered liquid, ran it across her face, soaking the paleness, the tired eyes. She looked at her image in the mirror. How funny her eyes looked with the black flaps underneath. But she could not laugh. She swayed from drowsiness, her head stinging.

Time to sit down and read, she whispered, tossing the rag, wrung of water, in the soap dish. The test was tomorrow and she must study, stay up all night. The minutes were slipping by fast. There was little time. Start from the end and go forward, from the middle and go backward. Start at the beginning and never stop, go on and on, reading the printed words.

LAISSEZ FAIRE

By D. D. Wesley

Every year Spring fudges eagerly
on Winter's time
Hyacinths and jonquils competing with
poinsettias and chrysanthemums
Fireplaces bowing to sun parlors two months
early.
But Spring will suffer a setback this year;
Japanese magnolia is blooming in January.

A BAMBOO FANTASY

By Nell Berry

At the back of the garden, narrow and deep,
Still and tall the bamboos sleep.
And an old tune sighs on the silver leaves,
Deep in the heart of the bamboo trees.

The garden sleeps and the phlox is white,
Down in the garden late at night.
The midnight moon is threaded with shadow,
And grass dusts the earth with a silver powder.

But more magic than these, more magic than all,
Are the bamboo trees by the old brick wall.
The faded red brick and the silver trees,
Sigh in the breath of a delicate breeze.

The dew has fallen; it's past the time
For the moon to leave with the stars,
To empty the sky for the sun to climb,
Chinning himself on his golden bars.

But the garden is loath for the moon to leave,
So she's tucked herself in the bamboo trees.
Their leaves strain the light in a golden sieve
While the stars cavort as wild as they please.

Magic shakes each dreaming flower
And wakes them to the witching hour.
The moon sings a laughing song of gold;
A song that the bamboos knew of old.

A mocking bird on a bamboo twig,
Whirls in a dream of bottomless blue,
And climbs and soars in a heaven so big
That he loses the earth and his dreams come true.

The dawn grows light and the garden sleeps.
The last dark gathers, the last star flees.
Among the flowers a cool dream creeps;
The pale moon sleeps in the bamboo trees.

The tired wind sleeps and the silver moon
Has scattered itself on the dreaming leaves.
All things sleep for a tired heart's ease . . .
In the shadowed heart of the bamboo trees.

Captain

THE boy's bare feet were scuffed and tough as shoe leather, bandaged on the toe where a rock had proved too big for kicking. The faded blue-jeans were a tattered diary of many adventures. That rent there above the knee remained from the hike on the river bank; the patch in the seat was from the hasty exit over the barbed wire fence the time the gang teased old man Brown's bull; the hole in his pocket was from carrying too many pebbles for his sling-shot; he forgot how that jagged tear came to be in the hem. The light brown hair was burnished to a lighter shade and the skin burned a darker hue from days spent in the sun. The dark brown eyes were sober, as though seeking an answer for some difficult riddle. Little beads of sweat formed a salty mustache on the straight upper lip, glistened under his eyes, and pulled the fringes of his hair down in dank clusters. The red shirt with the cowboys and horses on it was faded, and worn thin at the elbows. It bulged peculiarly at the waist, where it was tucked into the blue-jeans. The bulge didn't behave as though it was attached to him, bouncing gently up and down with his steps. What's more it often seemed to move as though it had a will of its own, wriggling protestingly.

His steps lagged as he approached the white house on the corner. Then, as though screwing up his courage, he walked faster, attempting to whistle a little tune through taut lips. Entering the cool relief of the shade from the pecan tree, he bounded up the steps and crossed the porch, scarcely seeing the lanky boy sprawled in the swing with a book. Unhesitatingly his steps took him through the house to the kitchen, steamy with the good smell of dinner cooking. He climbed up on the kitchen stool and watched the woman busy at the stove.

"Mama?"

"What is it, Frank?"

"Can I have a puppy, Mama?"

"No."

"But, Mama, a puppy won't be any trouble, and he won't cost anything. Mr. Hicks said he'd give me one."

"No, I've told you before that you *cannot* have a dog. You'll forget to feed and water it and then it'll be for me to do."

"No I won't, Mama. I'll take care of him all the time. You won't even have to do a thing, except maybe save the scraps off the table. You won't have to do that, I'll feed him right after dinner."

"Frank, a puppy is *too* much trouble. I don't have the time to keep after him with a broom and mop until he's house broken. And you will forget to take care of him no matter what you say."

"No Ma'm I won't. Please let me have one."

"I don't want to hear any more about it. You may NOT have a puppy, and let that be the last of it. Now go get washed up for din. . ."

Something had happened to the front of Frank's shirt. The bulge at the waist was wriggling, and a little black nose poked inquisitively out. It was followed by a pair of shoe-button eyes, eager and friendly. Silence. Frank futilely tried to push the puppy back into his stuffy prison, then waited dumbly. A scowl swept across Mrs. Hill's face. He pleaded desperately,

"Please Ma'm, can't I keep him? He won't eat much. He's just a little puppy. Honest, I PROMISE I'll take care of him. Please, Mama, please?"

Two pairs of eager dark eyes pleaded with her, one in their desire. A disgruntled look passed over her face.

"Well."

A pause.

"We . . . ll, I guess so, but you'll have to keep his pan full of water so he won't come whining to me when he's thirsty. You can keep him on the little screened porch, but you'll have to carry him out every morning. I won't have him waking me up with his yelping to get out. Hear me now? If you don't take good care of him, out he goes!"

"Oh, yes, MA'M! I'll take real good care of him. You just wait and see."

"Well, come on. Let's have a look at him."

Frank unbuttoned his shirt and caught the wriggling little bundle in his arms. He was white with black spots on his nose and ears. His little tail wagged half his body with its wind-mill whirlings. Despite herself, Mrs. Hill smiled and tickled him under his chin, receiving a lick of a very wet pink tongue in return.

"We'll have to think up a name for him."

"Oh, I've already thought up one, Mama. I'm gonna call him Captain."

"Now don't you want to give him some milk? And call the others to see him?" Instantly galvanized, Frank called,

"Barbara, Joe, come see what I've got!"

He procured a saucer and poured milk into it, maneuvering with the pup tucked under one arm. The note of excitement in his voice had brought Babs and Joe running.

"What?"

"What HAVE you got?"

'A dog! oh goody!" in ecstasy.

They carried a saucer to the porch, put it down, and set Captain down in front of it. It didn't take him long to see what was expected of him. He sniffed at the contents with his little black nose, and then his pink tongue began to move, rapid fire.

"Mama said we could have him," Frank stated proudly.

"What are we gonna call him?" Joe wanted to know.

"I've already got a swell name. I'm going to name him Captain, on accounta they're always brave and fierce in all the stories."

At the moment Captain was investigating his surroundings, and didn't look a bit brave or fierce tumbling down the broad back steps. He came to Joe then, and sniffed at his shoe lace.

Backing off a step with a sudden gleam in his eye he pounced on the unsuspecting lace. Quarreling noises emanated from his chest, sounding like a baby thunder cloud. Tugging viciously he dragged the lace, shoe and foot, until Joe yelled, "Hey, come back here with my foot."

Joe poked out a hand and flopped him over on his back. Captain complained more fiercely, and snapped and clawed at the fingers waved back and forth under his nose. His paws scratched the air, futilely attempting to find his foe.

"Where are we going to keep him, Frank?"

"Mama says we can keep him on the little back porch if we fix a box for him and keep it cleaned up, and take real good care of him. I'm gonna fix a box for him now. Want to help?"

"Sure, I know where there's a big box. It's in the wood shed. Let's go get it."

The two boys set out for the shed, Captain doing his best to keep up. Barbara ran in the opposite direction calling, "I've got an old doll blanket we can put in the box for him to sleep on."

They lined the box with the blanket, lifted Captain and placed

him down in it. He looked up at them with wonderment in his eyes as if to ask, "Why am I here in this dark little space? Have I done anything wrong?"

Quickly Frank lifted him out. What would they ever do when night came and they had to put him in there to sleep? Would he cry? How could they bear to leave him there to cry all night? They looked at each other in dismay when Mrs. Hill called, "Come get washed up for dinner, Daddy will be here in a minute."

Captain scooted after them, and was initiated into the rites of water-splashing before meals. The towel was passed around the circle, one drying on one end while another utilized the other end.

They were drying the last drops when they heard the front door. That was Daddy, just wait until he heard the news. They spurted from the bathroom and pounced on him, all shouting breathlessly, "Daddy, guess what we've got. Frank brought him, and mother said we could keep him. Wait 'til you see him. He's so tiny!"

Captain scudded around the corner, hot on their heels, as they all stopped for breath, with Mr. Hill wondering what to expect.

"Well, well, now what do you know about this? What a cute little rascal!"

He chucked Captain under the chin, and turned him over when the dog attempted to bite his finger. After admiring the new addition properly, he waded through his excited brood to give his wife a dinner kiss. They all seated themselves around the broad dining table and began to eat just as soon as the blessing was said. Mystified by the sudden withdrawal of his attention, Captain wandered in and out among the legs, pulling a shoe lace here, nibbling on the cuff of another. His diminutive paws made a soft sput on the linoleum, and the busy tail struck the chair rungs with a soft rhythm.

When dinner was over the boys scooped Captain from under the table, and took him to the front porch.

"Well, what are we going to do now?"

"Let's take him around and show him to all the boys."

"Oke, we can take him in one of our baskets on our wheels."

So saying, they slid their bicycles from the garage and enthroned Captain in one of the baskets.

"Let's head for Pug's first," Joe called.

"O. K. Then we'll go to Vic's and Jerry's."

Captain faced the wind as they rode, sniffing it searchingly, ears flung back with the breeze, eyes crinkled with enjoyment.

It was late afternoon when the boys returned from their trip. Captain was weary with excitement. He had been petted and admired as much as any one puppy could desire. At each house where they'd stopped, the boy and his dog would join them, after, of course, admiring Cap, until in the end there had been quite a retinue. The group had ridden all the way to the forks before turning back, and on the way back had dropped the boys at the houses where they had been acquired. When Frank, Joe, and Captain reached home, Captain was fed another saucer of milk, and put to bed in his box. He dropped off to sleep as soon as he snuggled into the soft blanket, and slept soundly while the children had supper and got ready for bed. But no sooner had they all climbed into bed and were tucked securely, than Captain began an excited, shrill yapping. Mrs. Hill warned the children not to give in to him.

"We don't want to be up with him all night, do we? He's got to get used to his new surroundings."

Unhappily, the children stayed in bed, and slept only after the puppy had whimpered himself to sleep. And so Captain became a member of the Hill family.

A gang of boys; their gang of dogs. High adventure was theirs. Like the time Frank slipped from a vine swing on the river bank and everybody thought he was killed, but only had his breath knocked out. There was the hidden hut where so many raids were plotted. One time Captain was brought home in a box, unconscious from being hit by an automobile. He had given chase to its wheels, and they had proved the better when encountered. But hardy little Captain pulled through that episode sound as a dollar.

Then there was the time the whole neighborhood was alarmed by high shrill cries of a dog in distress. The Hill brood converged upon their house to be sure it wasn't Captain, and were distressed to find their pet in mortal pain. Mrs. Hill suspected snake or spider bite, and told how he had suddenly begun to howl with pain as he had come from under the house. She bathed him with alcohol and swaddled him in old cloths while the children watched. His bed was brought into the kitchen where a watchful eye could see him. Gloom shrouded the household for days as pain shivered his body. His glassy eyes stared at all who visited him, never really seeing them at all.

Then one day a week later the glaze was gone from his eyes, and his tail wagged feebly when Mrs. Hill began her daily ministrations. The household breathed easier and began to settle back into its routine. Captain soon was able to get out into the yard and let the sun take the kinks out of his stiff limbs. Then it was only a few days until he swung back into his old habit of following the boys in their excursions.

Captain retained his love of riding and rode in the baskets of the bicycles as often as possible. He would hop into the back seat of the car at any opportunity, climb to a rear window, and nose the air ecstatically.

Suddenly Captain was stricken with a strange malady. One day when he was three years old, and everyone thought had borne his share of trouble and would now surely live to a peaceful old age, he became ill. None could guess what was wrong with him. He had no appetite and could not keep food if he ate it. Every day saw a weaker Captain, and soon he was so ill that Mr. Hill took him to the Pet Hospital. He seemed to be wasting away beyond all help, for not even the doctor seemed to know what was the matter with him. It was impossible! He couldn't just die *this* way! Not Captain! It wasn't fair. It was like not dying with boots on.

But Captain did die, on a cold weary Sunday, just as the family returned from church. His bed had been placed on the hearth of the fireplace so he might not feel the raw cold. They all filed in and, without stopping to take off their wraps, went to the mantel to see how Captain was. He looked up at them with an apologetic glance, as if he'd only waited for them all to be there. Then his eyes closed. That was all.

That was enough to send each member of the family in a different direction to be alone with his grief.

Next day the funeral was held. The deceased was shrouded in the blanket he'd slept on, his bed was his coffin. Barbara had composed a little poem to be read as an epitaph.

"Here lies Captain Hill
Cold and still,
He now is dead,
So here is laid."

Mr. Hill had dug a deep hole and as the box was placed, Barbara waited for someone to say that they thought someone ought

to say something. But no one did, so nothing was said, and her poetic effort was lost. Choked silence while spade upon spade of dirt filled the cavity. A few heavy stones were placed upon the grave, and the mourners returned to the house.

DIRTY GREY AIR

By Dot Cobb

Dirty grey air
Sluggishly moving
Smoke
Crawling up tired bodies
Slithering
Into dirty nostrils.

Stabbing cry of a
Miserable baby
Demanding
Stale milk
From his dull-eyed
Listless mother.

Whine of a fat woman
Selling her
Soul
To a stranger

"And Sarah that's
My daughter ran
Around with that married
man who drinks I've done
Everything I know I've
Cried . . . I've . . . I've"

Bleary-eyed men
Reeking of tobacco
Liquor
And sweat
Reading old newspapers
Spitting
On the floor
This I have seen.
These are my people
Whites
God's chosen.

CHRIS

By Jo Ann Michael

IT SEEMS as though I've known Christopher Payne all my life, but really I've only known Chris three years. I met him at a masked ball in Wyandotte, Michigan, my home town. My best girl-friend's father introduced us, and as he wasn't dancing, I asked Chris if he wished to dance.

"I can't dance, Elizabeth. I only have one leg," he replied bitterly. I must have turned purple for he grinned and asked me to the show the next night, "to make up for it" he said. I said "yes" and on our first date I wasn't too impressed. One of my girl-friends (?) Edwina Thomas was also there.

Edwina is a very small girl with brown eyes and she just has to look at a man for him to fall head over heels in love with her, so I thought "Well, at least thanks for the memory, Chris!" Chris and Edwina went together for several months, then one night Chris came to see me.

"Why, Chris! Hello! Won't you come in? How have you been?" I asked, wondering "What happened to Eddy?"

"Edwina is someone else," he answered my questioning look. "May I talk with you for a while, Liz?"

"Of course, Chris. You can always come to me." I answered as my heart slowly turned over. "Let's make some pop-corn while we talk."

"Swell," he answered, relief flooding his face.

After we had made the pop-corn and were sitting drinking cokes and eating the warm, salty pop-corn, Chris started telling me the story of his life.

"There's not much to tell, Liz. I was born on August 28, 1924, the youngest of six children. We have a farm outside of town with about 78 acres. I only went to the ninth grade, then went back to the farm and helped Dad.

When I was seventeen, I went into the Navy and was in all the heavy fighting, Guam, the Marshall Islands, including Iwo Jima. I came back without a scratch. I don't think I've ever really been afraid in my life except out there, not knowing what the future held for me.

I got back in August, 1947. I bought a jeep, regardless of Herbert's (Chris' older brother) warning that I would be killed. One day, I was riding out on the old Asheville road that isn't paved and there was an old mangy dog in the way. I tried to keep from hitting that dog and tried to wave at Tommy Adams, who lived on the farm next to ours. The jeep hit a large dip in the road and turned over three times and when it stopped, my left leg was clamped beneath it. They took me to Thomas's Clinic and Popeye (Dr. Thomas) said they would have to amputate my left leg above the knee. For five days I didn't know what was happening to me, then finally I told them to amputate, to save my life. Later I was taken to the Veteran's Hospital in Dearborn where they amputated more of my leg. I'm still paying my hospital bill to Popeye. You know that Edwina is Popeye's grand-daughter. Well, he has forbidden her to see me and tonight she told me that she didn't want to be seen with a cripple, anyway."

"Chris, she didn't mean it, I know. Edwina is really a sweet kid, once you get to know her." I quickly came to her defense. "Talk to her, Chris."

"No, I don't want to ever see her again. Liz, you don't think I'm a cripple, do you?" his eyes pleaded for a "no."

"Of course not. I never have and so why should I begin now. But now, it's late. Go home. Please," I pleaded.

"All right," he sighed. "Good night, Elizabeth."

Chris and Edwina were soon going everywhere together again. I was happy, but within my heart I was doubtful, for one day rumors came to me about Chris and Edwina.

Even though Edwina had done a million things wrong I knew that she was too sweet a kid for anything like I had heard, so I told her about the rumors.

"Liz, how awful, and you say that Chris told Sammy, your brother and then it went from him to others! I've got to get to the bottom of this! We're going to see him," she cried.

"No, Eddy! Leave it alone," I begged.

I got nowhere and we were soon down where Chris worked and it was all out in the open. Chris literally exploded. He was all set to whip Sammy, although I finally soothed them both by saying, "Forget it and let it go no further than the three of us and perhaps it will stop."

They finally agreed. At the end of the summer Edwina went

off to boarding-school and at Thanksgiving Popeye died.

Then last June, a year later, I ran into Chris down town one day.

"Liz! We haven't seen each other in a long time. Let's go have a coke," he greeted me enthusiastically.

"Swell, Chris. It's just what I need. You know I was working?"

"No, what can you do, except make pop-corn?" he teased me.

Laughing, I answered "Lots, smarty-pants. At the moment, I am a private secretary to Mr. John Sheaffer's son. You know, the big insurance man."

"Oh, yes," he replied. Ambling along beside him, I noticed how much older he looked; how he had lost weight, although I didn't say anything.

"What do you want, Liz?" he asked, as we slid into a booth at "Luke's."

"Ummm, I think I want a Sally Special," I told him.

"What in the world is a Sally Special?" Chris asked, in bewilderment.

I looked up. "Why, a Sally Special is every kind of ice-cream, then chocolate syrup with nuts and another dip of lime sherbert cream, all topped with a ripe, fresh cherry. Want one?" I teased Chris.

"Lord, no," he laughed and turned to the waitress. "Bring us two spoons, though."

"Chris, what have you been doing? I never see you," I gently reproached him.

"I've been working out on the farm. I've torn down the old house and we have built a new one. Now I am clearing off the land in front of the place," he answered proudly.

"Oh, Chris, it sounds wonderful. Someday I'll come to see it," I told him as our Sally Special came.

Chris didn't aske me for a date, but that night I was watching the wrestling matches over the television set at the Elks Club with Mom and Dad when Chris came into the room. He came over and sat down by me and we laughed and cut up then suddenly Chris asked:

"Did you know I was working here . . . as the bartender?"

Aghast I replied, "No, you mean . . ."

"Yes, it's all I can do."

"Now that is foolish," I stormed, "and you know it, Chris

Payne. Just because you're a disabled vet without a high-school diploma. You yourself have told me that you traveled in thirty-five states during the war. There's a million things you can do. I'm not going to have you saying things like that," I answered, almost in tears.

"Do you think so, really, Liz?" Chris asked, a gleam of hope coming into his eyes.

"I know you can. If I have faith in you, so do others." I answered his look with a gleam of my own .

Mom and Dad were rather silent on the way home that evening. I had told them about seeing Chris that afternoon and as we walked into the house Mom asked me ,"Do you like Chris, Liz?"

"Why, yes. I think Chris is very nice, don't you?" I answered slowly.

"No, we don't!" Dad answered quickly, as he walked into the room.

"But, why?" I cried out, in bewilderment.

"It's the way he looks at you, Elizabeth. He's in love with you, whether you know it or not." Dad answered firmly.

"Why, how silly! What if he is? He happens to be very nice and I'm proud to have him for a friend," I answered hotly.

"We're glad he's your friend, too, Elizabeth, dear. The point is—he could never make a living for you, with only one leg. Besides, he's older than you. You're not eighteen yet, and your head could very easily be turned, for he's pleasant and good-looking, but the fact remains—your backgrounds are too far apart."

"But, Dad," I cried.

Dad interrupted, "It's getting late. We'll talk about it in the morning."

"Mom," I turned. "Help me. Chris likes me, and I know he's not thinking of marriage. Anyway, I have four years of college yet to go and then two years of teaching before me. Chris knows that. He wouldn't stop me. Please tell me what to do?" I begged.

Mother patted my shoulder and replied:

"Elizabeth, there are some things that you can never obtain even though you want it very much. I am afraid you will feel sorry for Chris, because of his leg, and you know the old saying, 'Pity is akin to love!' It's better that you stop seeing him, or else be very distant when you do see him. I'm sorry, but this is life, and I want to keep you from getting hurt."

"Go to sleep now, baby," and saying that, she quietly turned and left.

From that night, Chris and I saw a lot of each other; going for rides in his black Ford "Annie Laurie" and going to see movies in the one theatre of Wyandotte, regardless of my parents' objections.

One day in July, I saw him on my way back to work and slid into his car. I immediately knew something was wrong.

"Chris," I asked softly, "what's the matter?"

"Liz . . . what's . . . what's the matter with your mom and dad? Why are they mad at me? Your dad used to be so friendly but now he acts as though I were an outcast or something."

"I . . . I don't know," I replied, not looking at him.

"Yes, you do! Maybe I haven't a right to ask, but I've got to know," he answered tightly.

"They—they just said you weren't the type of person for me to go around with. I have, though," I replied.

"Liz, did you tell your Mom about Eddy and I?" he questioned me.

"Of course not. We agreed not to, and it's not true, is it, Chris?" I asked.

"You ought to know better than that, Liz. I've never yet told you a lie," he looked at me and took my hand. "You do believe me?"

"Yes," I cried, "Oh, Chris, what are we going to do?"

"Would it do any good if I talked to your dad?" he asked.

"No, that's out of the question. I guess we will just have to stop seeing each other," I answered sadly.

"You know we can't do that," Chris moaned.

I didn't accept any more dates with him, but somehow every Tuesday night we were both there, together, in our own two seats in the back of Wyandotte's one darkened movie-house.

Two days before I went away to college I accepted a date with Chris and he took me to his home. We sat there and talked a lot about several things, then . . .

"Liz, unless your parents approve of me, we mustn't see one another again. I love you too much to hurt you, and I would only hurt you if we continued our friendship. Maybe it would be better if we just forgot each other . . ." he ended bitterly.

I agreed to his suggestion, although I knew in my heart it would never work.

The first month at college was sheer torture and then one Saturday night I couldn't stand it any longer and I called him.

Everything was forgiven in those three minutes and for an hour or two I knew what it was like to be at complete peace with the world. I finally came back down to realism, however, and began to study with my mind completely devoted to my lessons.

At Christmas, my first real vacation since going to college, I was a little skeptical. For I knew I would get to see Chris only a few times, if at all.

With his working and Mom and Dad against us and everyone who saw us together running to Mom and Dad on wings, it seemed to us, to tell them we were together, I knew it would be practically impossible.

Christmas night we were down at the Elks Club and I still hadn't seen Chris at all. I was in literal heaven for I knew I would see him!

We walked in and no Chris! I was almost in tears.

To have come here where we fell in love and to have to remember it all, and Chris not here just made me heartsick. I walked slowly over to the shuffleboard table and was playing by myself when Chris walked through the door. It was the first time I had seen him dressed in a suit and he looked marvelous! The light tan suit he wore set off his dark hair and the red tie his shining blue eyes!

As he walked toward me, I grinned and asked, "Who fixed that tie? Let me fix it." I couldn't look at him because if I had, I would surely have cried or done something equally foolish.

Before I left that evening, he had asked me to come meet his family Saturday morning but I couldn't as I would be visiting friends out of town, but I promised I would try to come by.

Saturday morning I woke up about 6:00 o'clock and I wondered if my hostess, Mrs. Stevens, would drop me by Chris' for a minute on the way back to Wyandotte later in the day.

About 9:00 o'clock we left Detroit and started the 12 mile trip to Wyandotte. I hesitantly asked Mrs. Stevens if she would drop me at Chris's.

"All right," she reluctantly agreed, "but you may stay only five minutes."

My heart was in my shoes as I walked up to the door.... Have I lost my mind completely?... My mom and dad would kill me and just think what would happen to my reputation if anybody should see me here!

The door was opened by a tiny woman whom I knew to be his mother. She had long gray hair braided in a knot at the nape of her neck and her eyes were a clear blue.

"Won't you come in? You must be Elizabeth. I'll call Chris. He's still in bed," she told me pleasantly.

"Oh, is this your puppy!" I exclaimed over a tiny ball of fur no longer than my hand.

"Yes," she explained. "It's my birthday present from Chris. I was 69 in November. He loves Chris so. Last night Chris came in rather late and the puppy woke us up barking for him to play."

"Chris... There's a young lady here to see you. Come on, dear!" she called through the door.

"Wait a minute, Mom."

I heard him get up and something like bells jangling and I realized that he was putting on his leg. In a few minutes he came out and he had on a blue corduroy shirt that was unbuttoned. I told him to hold his mother's dog while I buttoned his shirt. As I buttoned his shirt, I wondered if he could hear my hammering heart.

His mother asked, "Won't you spend the day?"

"Oh, I'd love to, but I must get back to Wyandotte. Maybe I can take a rain-check on it, though," I answered her as Chris and I wandered out the door holding hands.

"Women!" he muttered. "I guess you know I could get first degree murder if your mom and dad knew about this."

"But Chris, you asked me out," I replied, hurt.

"Oh, honey, I'm sorry. Forgive me. I just got up," he whispered.

"Oh, Chris!" I breathed.

Suddenly we heard the car horn and I pulled away and called "Wait a minute. Oh, Chris," I choked. "I've got to go. I won't see you again."

"I've a free night Wednesday. It's your birthday isn't it?" he asked quickly.

"Yes, I'll be eigrteen," I answered as I turned from him.

"I'll call you. I have something very important to ask you. Bye, Honey."

REMEMBERED

By Frances Brewer

The evening sun is slowly setting
as night begins to settle over our
small country town, casting its dreamy
shadows on the passing people.

As we walk down the shady street, the street
which we know so well, we gaze at the old
familiar homes remembered from a long ago
childhood now living only in our memory.

Memory, memory of the years gone by
Of the sorrows, the heartaches, joys, and
fears that comes drifting over the years
at this time of day when time seems still.

Glancing up the dimly lighted avenue time
seems to slip back thru the years as
we again skip lightly home from school swinging
our old lunch pail now sadly lacking of food.

Washing in the family basin, fussing over
the towel, finally ended by a glare from
father we settled down amid squeals of laughter
as brother John makes a face at the stern back
of father.

Supper over and dishes washed, the family
gathers around the fire as mother conducts
our family worship before tucking us
children away for a night in dreamland.

All is quiet as mother leaves the
room thinking her small cherubs soundly asleep
as angelic innocence creeps over their
rosy faces now scrubbed clean by soap.

Feeling her presence gone from the room
the little cherubs at once become alive,
ready for the usual rousing pillow
fight, an every night routine.

Feeling brother John clasp me around the leg
ready for the nightly battle I look down,
surprised, into the face of my small daughter who
has met her Daddy to walk home with him for supper.

FANCY A FAIRY

By Jean Weldy

Fancy a fairy and let her run
The range of all thought,
Gathering here and there in turn
A flower, then a leaf that chance caught
Among the bramble of my mind.
Then have her toss these flowers
to the wind.

THE SEA AT NIGHT

By Jean Weldy

The sea at night is solemn in its intent;
The black rolls rise and fall alone and cold
While shimmering beams moon-sent
Drop hesitatingly among the dashed drops borne
Along atop the wave. The shore line
Moves mysteriously, the tide assuming power.
The brick salt air sings and sweeps the shore
All for beauty in ocean's honor.

Curtain Call

NELL BERREY—

A French major and active *Alabamian* writer, Nell has caught something of the swaying of bamboo trees in her poem, "Bamboo Fantasy". Nell is a junior and came to Alabama College from Judson in her sophomore year.

FRANCES BREWER—

Says she likes to "try" to write poetry and we say she does a pretty good job. The author of "Remembered" is a sophomore English major from Birmingham, Alabama.

JUNE BURDEN—

The author of "Captain" is a freshman vocational home economics major from Selma. June worked on her high school annual back home and has entered campus literary life with a bang.

DOT COBB—

One is likely to get fooled by Dot's laughing manner for she is very serious about some things as is evidenced by her poem, "Dirty Grey Air". Dot is a sophomore liberal arts major from Russellville, Ala.

BETTY JOYCE GREER—

Editorship of the *Alabamian* doesn't leave one much time to write, especially if one is as busy in campus affairs as "B. J." She is a senior sociology major from Sheffield, Alabama. Perhaps it was from her sociology that B. J. picked up the idea for "Next Time?"

ANNA LUKES—

Anna is well qualified in the field of writing. She has written professionally for both the *Mobile Press-Register* and the *Birmingham News,* and has been a member of the *Mademoiselle* College Board for two years. "Midnight Song of Wanda" presents a picture of college life, or should we say night life? Anna is a junior English major from Mobile.

PAT MAYHER—

A quiet and unassuming nature covers a cauldron of mental activity which produced the poem "I Dreamed There Was Utter Darkness". Pat is a sophomore Spanish major from Mobile.

JO ANN MICHAEL—

An eighteen year old freshman elementary major, Jo Ann is still a Texan at heart but her present home is in Leeds, Alabama. Her "Chris" is a touching story of a cripple.

JEAN WELDY—

A secretarial science major from Montgomery, Jean likes to collect junk and play the piano, not to mention writing poetry. She is the author of "Fancy A Fairy", and "The Sea At Night". Jean is a sophomore.

DOROTHY DEAN WESLEY—

"D. D." 's captivating grin has made her a campus favorite. She is president of Y.W.C.A., a senior sociology major, and her grin has escaped into the poem, "Laissez Faire".